

# Common Misconceptions of UIL Soccer Rules 2021-2022

## FREE KICKS

1. **Myth:** An opponent is not required to move back ten yards on a free kick and cannot be cautioned (yellow card) for standing less than ten yards away on a free kick unless the kicking team has requested ten yards from the referee.

**Fact:** Opposing players are REQUIRED to give ten yards even if not requested by the kicking team. An opposing player that stands in front of the ball for the purpose of delaying the kick or forcing the kicking team to request ten yards should be issued a yellow card.

**Rule:** "Players opposing the kicker *shall be at least 10 yards from the ball until it is kicked*, unless they are standing on their own goal line between the goal posts." "PENALTY: *An official shall caution a player who fails to move the required distance away from the ball . . . or engages in time-wasting tactics such as kicking or carrying the ball away after a free kick has been awarded to the opponent's team.*" (Rule 13-3-1, Page 67)

2. **Myth:** If a team sets up a wall to defend against a free kick, the attacking team may not take the free kick until the referee whistles for the restart of play even if the attacking team does not request 10 yards.

**Fact:** Unless the referee sets the wall and/or directs the attacking team to wait for the whistle, a "quick-kick" may be taken by the attacking team at any time regardless of whether the defending team is ready and/or has set their wall.

**Rule:** "As soon as the ball is in position to be played, *it may be played without a second whistle*. A second whistle is required to restart play [only] for the taking of a penalty kick, after a substitution is made, after a caution, disqualification, injury and *after setting a wall prior to a free kick.*" (Rule 9-1-3, Page 38)

**Situation:** "A direct free kick foul has been committed outside the penalty area. The official sounded the whistle and signaled a direct free kick. The kicking team takes the kick quickly and scores, but the defenders claim the goal should not be counted because there was no second whistle. RULING: Goal counts. No second whistle is required. (Rule 9-1-3, Situation A, Pages 38-39)

# FOULS

3. **Myth:** A player must be called for a handball even if they are reflexively trying to protect their groin, face or chest/breasts.
- Fact:** Any player that reflexively moves their hands to protect their groin, face or chest is NOT guilty of handling. This is considered a reflex action and NOT a deliberate act.
- Situation:** “A player, who is part of a wall in a free kick, moves the hands after the kick to protect the face from the ball. RULING: The hand movement is deemed to be a reflex action and is not considered deliberate handling. *Protecting the head, face, groin or chest from a hard shot or pass using the hands or arms as a reflex is not considered deliberate and therefore not handling.*” (Rule 12-2 Situation A, Page 56)
- Situation:** “A2 kicks a low hard pass to a teammate; (a) B2, a male player who is in the path of the ball, moves a hand to protect the groin and the ball touches the hand; (b) B2, a female player who is in the path of the ball, moves a hand to protect the chest and the ball touches the hand. RULING: Legal in both (a) and (b). *Protecting the head, face, groin and chest from a hard shot or pass using the hands or arms as a reflex is not considered deliberate and therefore not handling.*” (Rule 12.2 Situation C, Page 56)
4. **Myth:** A challenge/tackle from behind is never legal and always a foul.
- Fact:** A fair/clean tackle from behind (i.e., the player makes contact with the ball first rather than the opponent) is legal so long as it is not violent or dangerous and the ball is within playing distance.
- Rule:** “Provided the ball is within playing distance”, a “*player may be legally challenged from behind.*” (Rule 12-5-2, Page 57)
5. **Myth:** Both “playing on the ground” and a “high kick” are illegal and always a foul.
- Fact:** Players are permitted to both play the ball while on the ground and “high kick” so long as the referee does not deem such actions to be dangerous or likely to cause injury.
- Rule:** “A player shall not participate in dangerous play, *which is an act an official considers likely to cause injury to any player.* This includes playing in such a manner which could cause injury to self or another player (opponent or teammate).” (Rule 12-6, Page 58)
- Situation:** “A2 plays the ball to A3 *while lying on the ground.* RULING: Legal, provided A2 did not create a danger to A3 or another player.” (Rule 12-6 Situation D, Page 58)
- Situation:** “Player A2 does a scissors kick during a game when (b) no player is within playing distance. RULING: The play is legal since no player was within playing distance.” (Rule 12-6 Situation A, Page 58)
6. **Myth:** Once a referee has signaled advantage and/or called out “Play On,” he cannot change his mind or go back and penalize the foul by awarding a free kick.
- Fact:** Referees remain free and should penalize any foul or misconduct with a free kick if the offended team does not gain a sufficient advantage to outweigh the benefit of receiving a free kick.
- Rule:** “If the referee applies the advantage, which was anticipated but does not develop at that time, *the referee shall penalize the original offense.*” (Rule 5-3-1(d), Page 31)
- Situation:** “Player A2 is fouled just outside the opponent’s penalty area. The referee signals visibly and verbally “play on.” (a) A2 then stumbles and within a couple of seconds falls to the ground. The referee whistles and awards a direct free kick from the point of the original foul. RULING: Correct. The advantage did not materialize and the foul must be given.” (Rule 5-3-1 Situation C, page 32-33)

# MISCONDUCT: RED AND YELLOW CARDS

7. **Myth:** Coaches and bench personnel may criticize the referees as much as they like so long as they do not use foul, offensive or insulting language.
- Fact:** Coaches should refrain from criticizing or arguing with the referees in any manner that can be seen or heard by players or spectators. Those that publicly criticize the referees for any reason should be cautioned and shown a yellow card for dissent.
- Rule:** “The coach shall not indulge in conduct which would incite players or spectators against the officials. *Public criticism of officials or players is unethical.*” (Coaches Code of Ethics, Page 5)
- Rule:** “A player, coach or bench personnel shall be cautioned (yellow card) for: (c) objecting by word of mouth or action to *any decision given by an official (dissent).*” (Rule 12-8-1(c), Page 60)
- Situation:** “Near the end of the first half, the visiting coach is cautioned by a referee for unsportsmanlike conduct. The coach continues to indicate, by gestures, dissatisfaction with the referee’s decision. **RULING:** The coach shall be disqualified and removed from the vicinity of the playing area.” (Rule 5-3-1 Situation B, page 32)
8. **Myth:** Any defender that commits a foul in the penalty area which denies an obvious goal scoring opportunity must be disqualified and shown a red card because he was the “last man.”
- Fact:** It is only a yellow card offense if the defender was attempting to play the ball and the result of the foul is a penalty kick. In all other situations in which a defender denies an obvious goal scoring opportunity, a red card should be issued.
- Rule:** A player “shall be cautioned (yellow card) for: (f) unsporting conduct, including, but not limited to: (15) a player who commits an offense against an opponent within the player’s team penalty area *in an attempt to play the ball* that denies the opponent an obvious goal-scoring opportunity *and the referee awards a penalty kick.*” (Rule 12-8-1(f)(15), Page 60-61)
- Situation:** “Player A, while attempting to play the ball, trips the attacking player in the penalty area, denying an obvious goal-scoring opportunity. **RULING:** The official awards a penalty kick to the opponents and issues a caution to Player A.” (Rule 12-8-1 Situation D, page 63)
9. **Myth:** A player who has been red carded must leave the stadium or general vicinity of the playing area and may not remain with the team or on the bench.
- Fact:** A player who has been ejected is thereafter restricted to the team area but is not required to leave the field area. However, any coach or other adult personnel that receives a red card must leave the vicinity of the playing area and shall have no further contact with the team (e.g. cannot coach or give directions from the stands).
- Rule:** A Player who is issued a red card is “Restricted to team area.” A substitute or other student who is issued a red card is “Restricted to team area for substitutes or other students.” “Adult bench personnel must leave the vicinity of playing area” if issued a red card. A coach “Must leave the vicinity of playing area” if issued a red card. (Misconduct Penalty Chart, Page 62)
- Rule:** “A coach who is disqualified *shall leave the vicinity of the playing area immediately and is prohibited from any contact, direct or indirect, with the team during the remainder of the game.* Failure to comply will result in termination of the game.” (Rule 12-8-3(c), Page 62)

10. **Myth:** A player who was on the field at the end of the first half is red carded for misconduct during halftime. His team must therefore play short in the second half.

**Fact:** Red cards issued to players for misconduct during halftime have no effect on the number of players that team may field in the second half.

**Situation:** “Between periods or during the halftime interval, a team member directs offensive, insulting or abusive language at an official. The team member is disqualified. The team will be able to play with 11 players the next period. **RULING:** Legal. *A team does NOT play short for a team member disqualified during an interval between periods.*” (Rule 12-8-2 Situation F, Pages 64)

11. **Myth:** A player cannot be cautioned for committing their first foul of the game.

**Fact:** There are multiple cautionable offenses. A player may be cautioned and shown a yellow card for both persistent infringement (committing multiple fouls throughout the game) and/or for reckless play (committing a single, reckless foul).

**Rule:** “A player, coach or bench personnel shall be cautioned (yellow card) for: (b) persistent infringement of any of the rules of the game; (f) unsporting conduct, including, but not limited to: a *player who displays reckless play.*” (Rule 12-8-1, page 60)

**Situation:** “During the match, (a) A1 commits a foul in a reckless manner. **RULING:** caution A1 for unsporting conduct.” (Rule 12-8-1 Situation B, page 62)

# SUBSTITUTIONS

12. **Myth:** The goalkeeper does not have to be substituted if he/she is injured and attended to on the field but is able to continue playing.

**Fact:** Any time the clock is stopped to assess an injury, regardless of whether it is for a field player or goalkeeper, such player must leave the field. This is different from FIFA and USSF.

**Rule:** “If the referee stops the clock for an apparent injury to a field player or goalkeeper, the field player or goalkeeper will have to leave the field. The field player may be replaced, and the goalkeeper shall be replaced by either a substitute or a field player.” (Rule 3-3-2(b)(2), Page 15)

**Situation:** “The goalkeeper goes down after making a save and remains motionless for a few seconds, continuing to possess the ball. The official stops the clock to assess a possible injury. The referee determines that the goalkeeper is able to continue play immediately. No attendants are beckoned and play is restarted with an indirect free kick. RULING: Illegal. *Whenever the referee stops the clock for a possible injury, the player or goalkeeper must leave the field.*” (Rule 3-3-2 Situation C, Page 17)

13. **Myth:** A team is entitled to substitute as much as it likes and may do so even if it results in running down the time.

**Fact:** The referee is required to stop the clock for substitutes if he/she believes the team repeatedly substituting is doing so to waste time.

**Rule:** *When a team repeatedly substitutes to consume time, a referee shall order the timer to stop the clock during such substitutions and shall notify the coach of the offending team. The repetition may be construed as unsporting conduct” and a yellow card issued to the coach of the offending team.* (Rule 3-6, Page 20)

14. **Myth:** A substitute must wait on the sideline and cannot enter the field until the field player has exited the field. Only then may the substitute enter the field.

**Fact:** A substitute becomes a player when he/she is beckoned (i.e., waved) onto the field by the referee. Therefore, the substitute may enter the field at any time after the referee has waved him/her onto the field and does not have to wait for the field player to exit.

**Rule:** “A substitute becomes a player when he/she is beckoned onto the field of play, at which time the replaced individual is no longer a player.” (Rule 3-3-6, Page 16)

15. **Myth:** A player who leaves the field due to injury, equipment problems, or blood and is not substituted may re-enter the game during the run of play so long as the referee waves the player back on to the field.

**Fact:** If the team elects to play shorthanded rather than substitute the player, such player must wait until the next dead ball before re-entering the game with the referee’s permission.

**Rule:** “A team that elects or is required to play shorthanded for reasons other than misconduct may have the player(s) re-enter the game during a dead ball.” (Rule 3-3-7, Page 16)

**Situation:** “Team A is playing shorthanded with 10 players due to illegal equipment. (a) Player A2 runs onto the field during play. RULING: Illegal.” (Rule 3-3-7 Situation B, Page 19)

# INJURIES

16. **Myth:** The goalkeeper does not have to be substituted if he/she is injured and attended to on the field but is able to continue playing.
- Fact:** Any time the clock is stopped to assess an injury, regardless of whether it is for a field player or goalkeeper, such player must leave the field. This is different than FIFA and USSF.
- Rule:** “If the referee stops the clock for an apparent injury to a field player or goalkeeper, the field player or goalkeeper will have to leave the field. The field player may be replaced, and the goalkeeper shall be replaced by either a substitute or a field player.” (Rule 3-3-2(b)(2), Page 15)
- Situation:** “The goalkeeper goes down after making a save and remains motionless for a few seconds, continuing to possess the ball. The official stops the clock to assess a possible injury. The referee determines that the goalkeeper is able to continue play immediately. No attendants are beckoned and play is restarted with an indirect free kick. RULING: Illegal. *Whenever the referee stops the clock for a possible injury, the player or goalkeeper must leave the field.*” (Rule 3-3-2 Situation C, Page 17)
17. **Myth:** A player who has been removed from the game for evaluation of a potential concussion may return to the game once cleared by the coach.
- Fact:** Any player removed from the game for evaluation of a potential concussion may not return to play unless and until cleared by an appropriate health-care professional such as an adult trainer or other medical staff.
- Rule:** “Any player who exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion (such as loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion, or balance problems) shall be immediately removed from the contest and shall not return to play unless cleared by an appropriate health-care professional.” (Rule 3-3-2(b)(3), Page 15)
18. **Myth:** If the referee stops play for an injury, the correct restart is an indirect free kick for the team last in possession of the ball.
- Fact:** If play is stopped for an injury, the correct restart is a drop ball to the team last in possession of the ball at the point where the ball was when play was suspended. However, if the ball was inside the penalty area at the time play was stopped, the correct restart will be a drop ball for the goalkeeper regardless of which team last touched or had possession of the ball.
- Rule:** “The game is restarted with a drop ball: (c) following the temporary suspension of play for an injury or unusual situation.” (Rule 9-2-1(c), Page 39)
- Rule:** “If when play was stopped, the ball was in the penalty area or the last touch, by either team, was in the penalty area, the ball is dropped to the defending team’s goalkeeper with all opposing players outside the penalty area.” (Rule 9-2-3, page 39)

# THROW-INS

19. **Myth:** A throw-in shall be retaken by the same team if it never entered the field.  
**Fact:** A throw-in that never enters the field is considered a foul/bad throw. Therefore, the throw-in will be awarded to the opposing team.  
**Rule:** “If, on the throw-in, the ball fails to enter the field of play before it touches the ground, the ball is awarded to the *opponent* at the spot of the infraction.” (Rule 15-1-5, Page 71)
20. **Myth:** It is a foul/bad throw-in if one or both of a player’s feet are touching the sideline but extend over the touchline onto the field.  
**Fact:** So long as both of the player’s feet are at least touching the sideline, the throw-in is legal even if the player’s foot/feet extend onto the field.  
**Rule:** “The ball shall be thrown in any direction from the point where it crossed the touchline by a player who is facing the field of play and has both feet on the ground *on or behind the touchline.*” (Rule 15-1-2, Page 71) (See also diagram example (c) under Art. 3 on Page 71)

# OFFSIDE

21. **Myth:** An attacker cannot be called for offside if he gains the ball from a shot that rebounds off the goalkeeper or a defender because they intentionally played the ball.

**Fact:** An attacker in an offside position is still offside if he receives the ball from an opponent making a deliberate attempt to keep the ball from going into the goal (i.e, a save). This applies regardless of whether the "save" is made by the goalkeeper or a defender.

**Rule:** "A player in an offside position receiving the ball from an opponent, who deliberately plays the ball (*except from a deliberate save*), is not considered to have gained an advantage." Rule 11-1-4, Page 42

**Situation:** A10, in an offside position, receives the ball from B5 playing near the post and trying to clear a shot attempt: RULING: Offside because the ball came from a deliberate save. (Rule 11-1-4 Situation C, Page 43)

**Situation:** A10, in an offside position, receives the ball after it was saved and rebounded from the goalkeeper: RULING: Offside because the ball came from a deliberate save. (Rule 11-1-4 Situation B, Page 43)

22. **Myth:** An attacking player can be offside on a goal kick.

**Fact:** There is no offside on a goal kick.

**Rule:** "A player shall not be penalized for being in an offside position if the ball is received directly from a *goal kick*, corner kick or a throw-in." (Rule 11-1-2, Page 42)



## MISCELLANEOUS

23. **Myth:** The referee can only stop the clock for goals, yellow/red cards, injuries, and penalty kicks. The referee has no discretion to stop the clock for anything else.  
**Fact:** The referee has discretion to stop the clock for any reason he/she deems necessary. This might include situations where it is taking excessive time to retrieve a ball, to explain a call to a coach or player, to handle an escalating situation between players/teams, to remove a disruptive spectator, to consult with an assistant referee, etc.  
**Rule:** “The clock shall be stopped for an injury, for a penalty kick, for cautioning (yellow card), for disqualifications (red card), following the scoring of a goal *and when a referee orders the clock be stopped.*” (Rule 7-4-1, Page 36)
24. **Myth:** The provision of “ball boys” by the home team is preferred but not mandatory.  
**Fact:** The home team is required to provide at least two “ball boys.”  
**Rule:** “At least two ball holders *shall be provided* by the home team.” (Rule 6-1-1, Page 34)
25. **Myth:** Substitutes and bench personnel must wear pinnies on the sidelines.  
**Fact:** While the wearing of pinnies by bench personnel is recommended, it is not required.  
**Rule:** “It is *recommended* that substitutes wear distinguishing pinnies when warming up outside of the team area.” (Rule 4-1-3, Page 22)  
**Situation:** “During play, bench personnel are required by officials to wear pinnies while warming up outside the team area. RULING: False. It is recommended.” (Rule 4-1-1, Situation K, Page 24)
26. **Myth:** The color of the home team’s jerseys and socks must be the same.  
**Fact:** There is no requirement that the home team’s socks match the color of their jerseys.  
**Rule:** “Both socks shall be the same color, with the visiting team wearing solid white socks and the home team wearing socks of a single dominant color, *but not necessarily the color of the jersey.*” (Rule 4-1-1(b), Page 21)